IN THE CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. (currently amended) A method in a data processing system within a peer-to-peer network managing processing of requests, the method comprising:

   receiving a request from a ~~requestor~~ user;

   comparing preferences within the request to a policy to form a comparison,
wherein the policy controls responses by the data processing system to the requests; and

   selectively responding to the request based on the comparison.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the data processing system is a node in the peer-to-peer network.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the data processing system is a central processing system in the peer-to-peer network.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the preferences provide parameters for which a response is desired.

5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the preferences provide parameters for which a response is not desired.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~requestor~~ user is an employee seeking to contact an employer.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the data processing system responds to the request if the policy ~~preference information for the data processing system~~ indicates that the data processing system is associated with an employer.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 , wherein the preferences identify a group associated with the ~~requestor~~ user and wherein the policy allows only interaction with members of a same group.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the preferences identify a group associated with the ~~requestor~~ user and wherein the policy allows only interaction with members of a different group.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the preferences identify a group associated with the ~~requestor~~ user and wherein the policy allows only interaction with members of selected groups of members.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~requestor~~ user is a member of a group.

12. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein groups are based upon at least one of social interaction preferences, dating preferences, music preferences, media preferences, skills of a member, interest, geographic location, membership in an organization, consumption preferences, purchasing history, and expertise.

13. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein membership in the group is based on payment.

14. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
generating an outgoing request, wherein the outgoing request includes a request for one of a chat session, instant messaging, or e-mail message.

15. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the request is for interaction with one of a dating service, an information sharing service, a group buying service, instant messaging, electronic mail, distributing software, distributing software upgrades,

distributing software fixes, an employment service, a music sharing service, a book sharing service, an image sharing service, and a travel service.

16.   (original) The method of claim 15, wherein members in a group exchange compensation for the interaction.

17.   (currently amended) The method of claim 1<u>6</u>[[5]], the compensation is financial, barter, or payment in kind.

18.   (currently amended) The method of claim 16, wherein the compensation is based on ~~are based on~~ attributes of the interactions including at least one of a size of files transfer, a quality of a good, a quality of a service, a type of good, a type of server, and a member rating.

19.   (original) The method of claim 16, wherein the compensation is managed using a clearinghouse.

20.   (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
authenticating an identity of the ~~requester~~ <u>user</u>.

21.   (currently amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the identity of the ~~requester~~ <u>user</u> is authenticated using a certificate.

22.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein certificates are used to identify individuals in a group.

23.   (original) The method of claim 22, wherein each certificate within the certificates is associated with at least one of an IP address and an e-mail address.

24.   (original) The method of claim 11, wherein an existing member of the group can authorize a new member to the group.

25. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the member of the group can initiate a vote to exclude another member of the group.

26. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein a duration of membership within the group is unlimited.

27. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein a duration of membership within the group is based upon receiving a payment from the member.

28. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein a duration of membership within the group is based upon a presence of selected attributes.

29. (original) The method of claim 28, wherein the selected attributes include at least one of marital status, age, and interests.

30. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein a duration of membership within the group is based upon at least one of contributions to the peer-to-peer data processing system and usage of the peer-to-peer data processing system.

31. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein access to the group is controlled.

32. (original) The method of claim 31, wherein the access is controlled using at least one of a password, payment of money, payment of services, and reference to a user preference.

33. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the request is an advertisement.

34. (original) The method of claim 33, wherein the advertisement is targeted based on the preferences.

35.   (currently amended) A data processing system comprising:

a bus system;

a communications unit connected to the bus system;

a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the memory includes a set of instructions; and

a processing unit connected to the bus system, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to receive a request from a ~~requestor~~ user; compare preferences within the request to a policy to form a comparison, wherein the policy controls responses by the data processing system to the requests; and selectively respond to the request based on the comparison.

36.   (currently amended) A data processing system within a peer-to-peer network data processing system for managing processing of requests, the data processing system comprising:

receiving means for receiving a request from a ~~requestor~~ user;

comparing means for comparing preferences within the request to a policy to form a comparison, wherein the policy controls responses by the data processing system to the requests; and

selectively responding means for selectively responding to the request based on the comparison.

37.   (original) The data processing system of claim 36, wherein the preferences provide parameters for which a response is desired.

38.   (original) The data processing system of claim 36, wherein the preferences provide parameters for which a response is not desired.

39.   (currently amended) The data processing system of claim 36, wherein the ~~requestor~~ user is an employee seeking to contact an employer.

40.   (currently amended) The data processing system of claim 39, wherein the data processing system responds to the request if the policy preference information of the data processing system indicates that the data processing system is associated with an employer.

41.   (currently amended) The data processing system of claim 36 , wherein the preferences identify a group associated with the requester user and wherein the policy allows only interaction with members of a same group.

42.   (currently amended) The data processing system of claim 36, wherein the preferences identify a group associated with the requester user and wherein the policy allows only interaction with members of a different group.

43.   (currently amended) The data processing system of claim 36, wherein the preferences identify a group associated with the requester user and wherein the policy allows only interaction with members of selected groups of members.

44.   (currently amended) The data processing system of claim 36, wherei[[o]]n the requester user is a member of a group.

45.   (original) The data processing system of claim 44, wherein groups are based upon at least one of social interaction preferences, dating preferences, music preferences, media preferences, skills of a member, interest, geographic location, membership in an organization, consumption preferences, purchasing history, and expertise.

46.   (original) The data processing system of claim 44, wherein membership in the group is based on payment.

47.   (original) The data processing system of claim 36 further comprising:
          generating means for generating an outgoing request, wherein the outgoing request includes a request for one of a chat session, instant messaging, or e-mail message.

48.   (original) The data processing system of claim 36, wherein the request is for interaction with one of a dating service, an information sharing service, a group buying service, instant messaging, electronic mail, distributing software, distributing software upgrades, distributing software fixes, an employment service, a music sharing service, a book sharing service, an image sharing service, and a travel service.

49.   (original) The data processing system of claim 48, wherein members in a group exchange compensation for the interaction.

50.   (currently amended) The data processing system of claim 49[[8]], the compensation is financial, barter, or payment in kind.

51.   (currently amended) The data processing system of claim 49, wherein the compensation is based on are based on attributes of the interactions including at least one of a size of files transfer, a quality of a good, a quality of a service, a type of good, a type of server, and a member rating.

52.   (original) The data processing system of claim 49, wherein the compensation is managed using a clearinghouse.

53.   (currently amended) The data processing system of claim 36 further comprising:
        authenticating means for authenticating an identity of the requester user.

54.   (currently amended) The data processing system of claim 53, wherein the identity of the requester user is authenticated using a certificate.

55.   (original) The data processing system of claim 36, wherein certificates are used to identify individuals in a group.

56.   (original) The data processing system of claim 55, wherein each certificate within the certificates is associated with at least one of an IP address and an e-mail address.

57.   (original) The data processing system of claim 44, wherein an existing member of the group can authorize a new member to the group.

58.   (original) The data processing system of claim 44, wherein the member of the group can initiate a vote to exclude another member of the group.

59.   (original) The data processing system of claim 44, wherein a duration of membership within the group is unlimited.

60.   (original) The data processing system of claim 44, wherein a duration of membership within the group is based upon receiving a payment from the member.

61.   (original) The data processing system of claim 44, wherein a duration of membership within the group is based upon a presence of selected attributes.

62.   (original) The data processing system of claim 61, wherein the selected attributes include at least one of marital status, age, and interests.

63.   (original) The data processing system of claim 44, wherein a duration of membership within the group is based upon at least one of contributions to the peer-to-peer data processing system and usage of the peer-to-peer data processing system.

64.   (original) The data processing system of claim 44, wherein access to the group is controlled.

65.   (original) The data processing system of claim 64, wherein the access is controlled using at least one of a password, payment of money, payment of services, and reference to a user preference.

66.   (original) The data processing system of claim 36, wherein the request is an advertisement.

67. (original) The data processing system of claim 66, wherein the advertisement is targeted based on the preferences.

68. (currently amended) A computer program product in a computer readable medium within a peer-to-peer network data processing system for managing processing of requests, the computer program product comprising:

first instructions for receiving a request from a ~~requester~~ user;

second instructions for comparing preferences within the request to a policy to form a comparison, wherein the policy controls responses by the data processing system to the requests; and

third instructions for selectively responding to the request based on the comparison.

69. (original) The computer program product of claim 68, wherein the preferences provide parameters for which a response is desired.

70. (original) The computer program product of claim 68, wherein the preferences provide parameters for which a response is not desired.

71. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 68, wherein the ~~requester~~ user is an employee seeking to contact an employer.

72. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 71, wherein the data processing system responds to the request if the policy ~~preference information for the data processing system~~ indicates that the data processing system is associated with an employer.

73. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 68 , wherein the preferences identify a group associated with the ~~requester~~ user and wherein the policy allows only interaction with members of a same group.

74. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 68, wherein the preferences identify a group associated with the ~~requester~~ user and wherein the policy allows only interaction with members of a different group.

75. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 68, wherein the preferences identify a group associated with the ~~requester~~ user and wherein the policy allows only interaction with members of selected groups of members.

76. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 68, wherei[[o]]n the ~~requester~~ user is a member of a group.

77. (original) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein groups are based upon at least one of social interaction preferences, dating preferences, music preferences, media preferences, skills of a member, interest, geographic location, membership in an organization, consumption preferences, purchasing history, and expertise.

78. (original) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein membership in the group is based on payment.

79. (original) The computer program product of claim 68 further comprising:
    fourth instructions for generating an outgoing request, wherein the outgoing request includes a request for one of a chat session, instant messaging, or e-mail message.

80. (original) The computer program product of claim 68, wherein the request is for interaction with one of a dating service, an information sharing service, a group buying service, instant messaging, electronic mail, distributing software, distributing software upgrades, distributing software fixes, an employment service, a music sharing service, a book sharing service, an image sharing service, and a travel service.

81. (original) The computer program product of claim 80, wherein members in a group exchange compensation for the interaction.

82. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 81[[0]], the compensation is financial, barter, or payment in kind.

83. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 81, wherein the compensation is based on ~~are based on~~ attributes of the interactions including at least one of a size of files transfer, a quality of a good, a quality of a service, a type of good, a type of server, and a member rating.

84. (original) The computer program product of claim 81, wherein the compensation is managed using a clearinghouse.

85. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 68 further comprising:

fourth instructions for authenticating an identity of the ~~requester~~ user.

86. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 85, wherein the identity of the ~~requester~~ user is authenticated using a certificate.

87. (original) The computer program product of claim 68, wherein certificates are used to identify individuals in a group.

88. (original) The computer program product of claim 87, wherein each certificate within the certificates is associated with at least one of an IP address and an e-mail address.

89. (original) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein an existing member of the group can authorize a new member to the group.

90. (original) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein the member of the group can initiate a vote to exclude another member of the group.

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91.   (original) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein a duration of membership within the group is unlimited.

92.   (original) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein a duration of membership within the group is based upon receiving a payment from the member.

93.   (original) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein a duration of membership within the group is based upon a presence of selected attributes.

94.   (original) The computer program product of claim 93, wherein the selected attributes include at least one of marital status, age, and interests.

95.   (original) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein a duration of membership within the group is based upon at least one of contributions to the peer-to-peer data processing system and usage of the peer-to-peer data processing system.

96.   (original) The computer program product of claim 76, wherein access to the group is controlled.

97.   (original) The computer program product of claim 96, wherein the access is controlled using at least one of a password, payment of money, payment of services, and reference to a user preference.

98.   (original) The computer program product of claim 68, wherein the request is an advertisement.

99.   (original) The computer program product of claim 98, wherein the advertisement is targeted based on the preferences.

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